

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 5 and 8-16 are presently pending in this application, Claim 1 having been amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 2, 5, 10 and 11-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over alleged Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (hereinafter "the admitted prior art") in view of Martellock (U.S. Patent 4,018,953); Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of Martellock and EP 449556 (hereinafter "EP '556"); Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of Martellock and MacNeill (U.S. Patent 5,385,873); Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of Martellock and McChesney et al. (U.S. Patent 4,454,833); Claims 1, 2, 10 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sander (U.S. Publication 2002/0100994) in view of the admitted prior art; Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sander in view of the admitted prior art and JP 2004-290766 (hereinafter "JP '766"); Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sander in view of the admitted prior art and EP '556; Claim 9 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sander in view of the admitted prior art and MacNeill; Claims 12-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Sander in view of the admitted prior art and Martellock; and Claim 16 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the admitted prior art in view of Martellock and McChesney et al.

Claim 1 has been amended herein. These amendments in the claims are believed to find support in the specification, claims and/or drawings as originally filed, for example, the

specification, page 19, line 6, to page 20, line 25, and no new matter is believed to be added thereby. If, however, the Examiner disagrees, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned who will be happy to work in a joint effort to derive mutually satisfactory claim language.

Before addressing the rejections based on the cited references, Claim 1 as currently amended is briefly reviewed. Claim 1 is directed to a method of manufacturing a honeycomb structural body, and it recites: “preparing a pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member; applying a sealing material in an uncured paste state onto a circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member; fitting onto the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member a ring-shaped scraper having a ring-shaped center member configured to make a contact with the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the ring-shaped center member makes the contact with the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member and applies a sufficient pressure the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member to scrape the sealing material and forms a sealing material layer on the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member while sliding along the circumferential surface of a pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member; moving said ring-shaped scraper in a length direction of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member from one end of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the ring-shaped center member is separated from the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member and the sealing material is spread over the circumferential surface of said pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member; and moving said ring-shaped scraper in the length direction of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member from an opposite end of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the moving of said ring-shaped scraper is reversed.”

It is respectfully submitted that none of Martellock, the admitted prior art and Sander teaches or suggests “fitting onto the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member a ring-shaped scraper having a ring-shaped center member configured to make a contact with the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the ring-shaped center member makes the contact with the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member and applies a sufficient pressure the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member to scrape the sealing material and forms a sealing material layer on the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member while sliding along the circumferential surface of a pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member,” “moving said ring-shaped scraper in a length direction of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member from one end of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the ring-shaped center member is separated from the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member and the sealing material is spread over the circumferential surface of said pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member” or “moving said ring-shaped scraper in the length direction of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member from an opposite end of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the moving of said ring-shaped scraper is reversed” as recited in amended Claim 1.

More specifically, Martellock describes a coating method in which a coating collar is slid along the surface of a cylindrical substrate positioned in its vertical position.¹ And according to Martellock, the coating collar has a gasket (16) and a ring (26) which make a seal-tight contact with the side of the cylindrical substrate and form a leak-proof trough with the side of the cylindrical substrate, and thus the leak-proof trough can contain a liquid

¹ See, for example, Martellock, Abstract.

material.² In the Martellock coating method, as the coating collar moves along the surface of the cylindrical substrate in its vertical position, the gasket (16) and the ring (26) maintain the seal-tight contact with the side of the cylindrical substrate while the liquid material in the trough is deposited onto the surface of the cylinder.³ Martellock simply states that the coating thickness depends on the viscosity and the rate of drying of a liquid material.⁴

The admitted prior art describes that a plate-shaped scraper (51) is fixed at a set angle and an interval with respect to the circumferential face of a rotating pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member (50).⁵ Sander simply shows a calibrating ring (30) set at the exit end of an extrusion chamber (18) to strip away excess seal member as a monolith passes through it.⁶ In that process, end caps (14a, 14b) cover the end faces of the monolith and form seals above and below to maintain a seal material within the extrusion chamber (18).⁷ As such, neither the admitted prior art nor Sander discloses or suggests using a ring-shaped scraper having a ring-shaped center member which makes a contact with the circumferential surface of a porous honeycomb member, fitting such a ring-shaped center member to make the contact with the circumferential surface of the honeycomb member and apply a sufficient pressure to scrape a sealing material for forming a sealing material layer while sliding along the circumferential surface of the honeycomb member, and moving the ring-shaped scraper in such a manner that the ring-shaped center member is separated from the circumferential surface of the honeycomb member and the sealing material is spread over the circumferential surface of the honeycomb member.

As such, it is believed that the proposed combination based on the admitted prior art, Sander and Martellock would not result in a method which would satisfy each and every

² See, for example, id., column 3, lines 5, to line 10.

³ Id.

⁴ See, for example, id., column 3, lines 33-37.

⁵ The specification, page 3, lines 15-25.

⁶ See, for example, Sander, page 2, paragraph 19, and Figure 1.

⁷ See, for example, id., paragraph 16, and Figure 1.

element recited in amended Claim 1. Therefore, the subject matter recited in amended Claim 1 is believed to be clearly distinguishable from Sander, Martellock and the admitted prior art.

MacNeill, EP '556, JP '766 and McChesney et al. are cited for the claimed components of the sealing material, the viscosity of the sealing material, a material for a ring-shaped center member and a urethane rubber and are not believed to teach or suggest "fitting onto the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member a ring-shaped scraper having a ring-shaped center member configured to make a contact with the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the ring-shaped center member makes the contact with the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member and applies a sufficient pressure the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member to scrape the sealing material and forms a sealing material layer on the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member while sliding along the circumferential surface of a pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member," "moving said ring-shaped scraper in a length direction of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member from one end of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the ring-shaped center member is separated from the circumferential surface of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member and the sealing material is spread over the circumferential surface of said pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member" or "moving said ring-shaped scraper in the length direction of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member from an opposite end of the pillar-shaped porous honeycomb member such that the moving of said ring-shaped scraper is reversed" as recited in amended Claim 1.

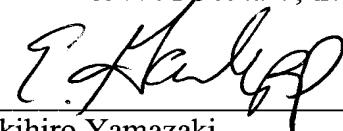
Because none of the admitted prior art, Sander, Martellock, MacNeill, JP '766, EP '556 and McChesney et al. discloses the fitting, moving and/or revering as recited in Claim 1, their teachings even combined would not render the manufacturing method of Claim 1 obvious.

For the foregoing reasons, Claim 1 is believed to be allowable. Furthermore, since Claims 2, 5 and 8-16 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 1, substantially the same arguments set forth above also apply to these dependent claims. Hence, Claims 2, 5 and 8-16 are believed to be allowable as well.

In view of the amendments and discussions presented above, Applicants respectfully submit that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early action favorable to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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